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# Council pay tribute to Epsom tree hero

7 August 2024



Councillors of Epsom and Ewell stood in silence in memory of local tree hero **Mike Ford**. The full council meeting held in the Town Hall chamber on 30th July heard a tribute from Councillor **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley Vale).

“It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Mike Ford on June 27, 2024. Mike was a pivotal figure in the creation of the Epsom Tree Advisory Board nearly three decades ago. He moved to Epsom in February 1981 and worked as a skilled carpenter for over 50 years, retiring in 2009. He is survived by his loving wife, Leslie, and their son, Darren, and daughter, Emma.

For many years, Mike dedicated himself to planting, nurturing, and caring for countless trees within our community and beyond. His passion for trees is evident in every project he undertook. I first met Mike in Rosebery Park around 2010 when the Friends group was developing a tree trail for park visitors. Thanks to Mike’s vast knowledge, the tree trail was published and is available to this day on the Friends of Rosebery Park website.

Mike’s deep understanding of the park’s trees was astounding, reflecting his unwavering commitment to the natural world. Mike could recount the origins of many trees in Rosebery Park and across the borough, often mentioning if they’d come from his own garden. I vividly remember finishing a walk with him, standing by the pond in Rosebery Park, gazing at willow trees, and he remarked, “We don’t plant trees to enjoy in our lifetime; we plant for future generations to enjoy.” This profound statement underscores the enduring impact of his work.

As our friendship grew, I became more involved with the Tree Advisory Board. Mike’s tireless efforts helped secure the planting and preservation of trees across the borough. His enthusiasm inspired a dedicated group of volunteers, embodying his can-do, will-do spirit. Mike’s passing leaves a significant void, and I will miss our conversations dearly. However, I am comforted by the memory of the successful replanting of the Mike Ford Copse in the Alexander Recreation Ground by board members last December. Mike was there to witness it.

Mike Ford’s legacy will endure through the Epsom Tree Advisory Board and the many trees he planted, which will continue to offer hope, shade, and beauty to future generations. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.”

Related report:

Dedicated Epsom tree-man

Image: Dedication event at Alexandra Recreation Ground honours local hero Mike Ford Epsom & Ewell, 3rd December 2023

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